

COMPLAINTS POLICY AND PROCEDURE

National Disability Services (NDS) is committed to ensuring that any person or organisation using services provided by NDS or affected by its operations has the right to lodge a complaint and to have their concerns addressed in ways that ensure access and equity, fairness, accountability and transparency.

The organisation will provide a complaints management procedure that:

- is simple and easy to use
- is available to all members, clients and stakeholders via the NDS website.
- ensures complaints are fairly assessed and responded to promptly
- is procedurally fair and follows principles of natural justice
- complies with legislative requirements.

OUR COMMITMENT

If you make a complaint to NDS you can expect that we will:

- treat you with respect
- tell you what to expect while your complaint is being looked into
- carry out the complaint handling process in a fair and open way
- provide reasons for decisions that are made
- protect your privacy

WHAT CAN I MAKE A COMPLAINT ABOUT?

You can make a complaint to NDS about the delivery of NDS services. From time to time, NDS consults with the sector to determine a policy position or to gauge the views of the sector. It is not the intent of this policy to allow a person or organisation to complain about the outcome of such consultations if the final result does not agree with that person or organisations position. A person may however lodge a complaint if a documented consultation process was not followed, or if the process was flawed.

NDS has as its members not-for-profit disability service providers who provide front line disability support services. We do not have the authority to directly investigate complaints about these organisations. If you have a complaint regarding one of our members, we recommend that you discuss the complaint with the organisation directly.

PROCEDURES

MAKING A COMPLAINT

A person wishing to make a complaint may do so in writing or verbally to:

- the staff member they were dealing with at the time, unless you are making a complaint about this person
- the State Manager or relevant national manager
- the Chief Operating Officer or Chief Executive, or

If the complaint is about:

- a product or service delivered by NDS, the complaint will normally be dealt with by the relevant manager
- a staff member, the complaint will normally be dealt with by the relevant manager
- a senior staff member, the complaint will normally be dealt with by the Chief Operating Officer or the Chief Executive
- the Chief Operating Officer, the complaint will normally be dealt with by the Chief Executive of NDS
- the Chief Executive, the complaint will normally be dealt with by the President of NDS
- Internal complaints, where a staff member makes a complaint concerning another staff member, will be dealt with in accordance with the Grievance Policy and Procedures of NDS.

Written complaints may be sent to the relevant NDS office. The relevant State Manager or national manager will be responsible for receiving this correspondence and directing it to the appropriate person.

PROCEDURE FOR COMPLAINTS MANAGEMENT

The person managing the complaint will be responsible for:

1. Registering the complaint:

- registering the complaint in the NDS complaints register
- informing the complainant that their complaint has been received and providing them with information about the process and time frame

2. Investigating the complaint:

- examining the complaint within 5 working days of the complaint being received
- informing the complainant by letter within 10 working days of the complaint being received of what is being done to investigate and resolve it, and the expected time frame for resolution.

As far as possible, complaints or appeals will be investigated and resolved within 20 working days of being received. If this time frame cannot be met, the complainant will be informed of the reasons why and of the alternative time frame for resolution.

3. Resolving the complaint:

- making a decision or referring to the appropriate people for a decision within 20 working days of the complaint being received
- Informing the complainant of the outcome and any options for further action if required

4. What if I am unhappy with the resolution?

- If you are not happy with the outcomes of a complaint, you may be able to lodge a complaint with the Ombudsman in your state. The Ombudsman's office will determine if it has the power to investigate your complaint.

RECORD KEEPING

A register of complaints will be kept by NDS. The register will be maintained by the General Manager Corporate Services and will record the following for each complaint:

- Details of the complainant and the nature of the complaint
- Date lodged
- Action taken
- Date of resolution and reason for decision
- Indication of complainant being notified of outcome
- Complainant response and any further action

Copies of all correspondence and other materials received by NDS in connection with any complaints will be kept for 7 years.

The complaints register and files will be confidential and access is restricted to the General Manager Corporate Services, the Chief Operating Officer, the Chief Executive and the President.

A statistical summary of complaints and appeals will also be kept by National Disability Services and maintained by the General Manager Corporate Services. The General Manager Corporate Services will be responsible for preparing a report on received feedback and complaints once a quarter to the Chief Operating Officer, the Chief Executive and the NDS Board.

RELATED POLICIES

Grievance Policy and Procedures

Unsatisfactory Performance and /or Unacceptable Behaviour Policy and Procedures

Whistleblower Policy